

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MOGADI 00628 01 OF 02 230652Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----098129 230654Z /11
Z 230615Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 6041
WHITE HOUSE FLASH

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0628
EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND BRZEZINSKI

FOR THE SECRETARY AND TARNOFF

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, US, SO
SUBJ: MEETING WITH SIAD BARRE

REF: STATE 073722

1. I MET WITH SIAD THIS MORNING FROM 0230 TO 0630 HOURS. HE TOLD ME THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT THE TERMS OF OUR LETTER BUT THAT THE ARRANGEMENT WILL BE "MEANINGLESS" UNLESS TANKS, ARTILLERY AND AIRCRAFT CAN BE PROVIDED. HE ASKED THAT WE REVIEW OUR POSITION WITH REGARD TO THESE ITEMS. PENDING SUCH REVIEW HE DID NOT FEEL THERE WAS ANY POINT IN OUR SENDING A MILITARY SURVEY TEAM. I EXPECT TO RECEIVE A LETTER FROM HIM SHORTLY IN WHICH HE MAY EXPRESS RESERVATIONS ABOUT PROCEEDING ON THE LIMITED BASIS WHICH I HAVE LUTLINED TO HIM. SIAD ALSO DWELT AT GREAT LENGTH ON THE SOMALIA'S NEED FOR ASSISTANCE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF US-SOMALI COOPERATION IN THIS AREA.

2. I TOLD SIAD THAT WE WERE ANXIOUS TO HELP BUT THAT IT WAS NOT REALISTIC TO EXPECT THAT TANKS AND
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AIRCRAFT WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. I REGRETTED THAT HE COULD NOT SEE THE VALUE IN OUR MAKING A BEGINNING AS DESCRIBED, TO LET US PROVIDE WHAT WE COULD NOW AND ALLOW THE SURVEY TEAM TO EXAMINE AND DISCUSS WITH HIM THE FULL DIMENSIONS OF HIS NEEDS. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES I SAID THAT I WOULD PROCEED ON MY WAY, PERHAPS TO SAUDI ARABI, ALTHOUGH I HAVE LEFT HIM IN SOME DOUBT

ON THIS POINT. IT IS NOT INCONCEIVABLE THAT HE WANTED TO SEE IF I WOULD REALLY LEAVE WITHOUT SOME CONCESSION ON MAJOR LETHAL ITEMS. HE COULD REOPEN THE MATTER BY CALLING ME BACK TO RECEIVE HIS LETTER BUT I DO NOT EXPECT THIS. AS THIS NOW STANDS I PLAN TO LEAVE HERE ABOUT 0930 LOCAL (TWO HOURS FROM NOW) WITH MY ONWARD ITINERARY UNCERTAIN.

3. SIAD ASCRIBED HIS RELUCTANCE TO PROCEED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ARMS SUPPLY ARRANGEMENT TO THE NEGATIVE REACTION OF HIS COUNCIL (HE HAD UNEXPECTEDLY GONE AHEAD AND CONSULTED WITH THEM WITHOUT WAITING FOR OUR REPLY TO HIS REQUEST DESPITE THE FACT THAT IT WAS IN HAND BY THE TIME I HAD TOLD HIM IT WOULD BE) HE ATTRIBUTED THEIR UNHAPPINESS TO THE TANKS AND PLANES QUESTION. AS HE RE-READ THE LETTER FOR THE UPTENTH TIME HE FASTENED ON THE WORD "FURNISHING" AND ASKED WHY WE COULD NOT "GIVE" THEM ANYTHING. I THINK SIAD IS JUST AS RELUCTANT AS HIS COUNCIL OR PERHAPS HE IS THE CHIEF HESITATER. HE POSES THE PROBLEM AS ONE OF RISK AND TRUST. IN HIS WORDS "WHEN YOU TELL ME NO TANKS, PLANES OR ARTILLERY AND MANY MORE LOOPHOLES, YOU ARE PUTTING US TO MORE RISK THAN YOU ARE HELPING US. IT IS A QUESTION OF TRUST: IF YOU WANT TO HELP US, THEN HELP US. WHAT CAN I TELL THEM? THAT I OBTAINED FROM THE US A FEW RIFLES? I HAVE TO CONVINCE OUR PEOPLE (PERHAPS HE MEANS SECRET

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CONVINCE HIMSELF) THAT IF WE DO SIGN WITH YOU THAT IT WILL BE MEANINGFUL" I DON'T THINK SIAD IS BARGAINING. IT IS A DIFFICULT DECISION FOR HIM. ASSOCIATING SOMALIA WITH THE UNITED STATES (EVEN IF WE THINK IT IS HIS BEST BET) WILL BE A CONTROVERSIAL DECISION HERE. GIVEN THE LIMITS OF THE ANTICIPATED TANGIBLE YIELD, AND HIS CONTINUING DEPENDENCE UPON OTHERS FOR FINANCING, HE MAY WELL DECIDE TO GET ALONG AS BEST HE CAN, HOPING THAT THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS WILL NOT ATTACK, FIGURING THAT IF THEY DO NOT HE CAN GET BY WITH WHAT HE HAS, BUT THAT IF HE IS INVADED REAL HELP MIGHT BE FORTHCOMING AND, IN ANY EVENT, THAT HE CANNOT EXPECT ENOUGH HELP FROM US IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE TO EITHER DETER OR DEFEND AGAINST AN ATTACK. FOLLOWING THIS LINE OF REASONING, SIAD MAY VIEW AN AGREEMENT OF THE TYPE PROPOSED AS "MORE OF A RISK THAN A HELP". SIAD WAS DISAPPOINTED BY OUR INABILITY TO DECLARE THAT WE WOULD "DEFEND HIS BORDERS" (I DELIVERED ALL THE RESPONSES IN STATE 73722), BUT I DON'T THINK HE REALLY EXPECTED A FLAT COMMITMENT. I THINK HIS MIND WAS ALREADY MADE UP OR THAT HE REALLY WAS BOUND BY THE COUNCIL'S REACTION.

4. RECOMMENDATION AND ACTION REQUESTED:

I SEE NO POINT IN REMAINING LONGER. I HAVE DONE MY BEST TO CONVEY OUR DESIRE TO HELP AND I THINK SIAD ACCEPTS THIS. BUT I HAVE MADE QUITE CLEAR TO HIM THE LIMIT OF WHAT WE CAN DO. GIVEN THE UNCERTAINTY OF SAUD'S AVAILABILITY AND THE FUTURE OF THE SUPPLY RELATION, I RECOMMEND THAT I NOT GO TO JIDDA.

THE EMBASSY WILL CABLE THE TEXT OF SIAD'S LETTER AND THE DEPT CAN FACTOR ITS CONTENT INTO ITS INSTRUCTIONS TO ME. IF IT CONTAINS ANY LAST MINUTE SURPRISE I WILL ASK JOHN LOUGHRAN TO FORWARD MY COMMENTS.

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I CANNOT SAY ENOUGH FOR LOUGHRAN AND HIS STAFF. THEY HAVE BEEN UNDER UNBELIEVABLE PSYCOLOGICAL AND WORKING PRESSURE HERE FOR SOME TIME. THIS IS A DIFFICULT, PECULIAR AND YET COMPELLING PLACE. THEY UNDERSTAND IT BETTER THAN THE REST OF US AND YET THIS HAS NOT MADE SPECIAL PLEADERS OF THEM. I RESPECT THEM.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0628

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND BRZEZINSKI

FOR THE SECRETARY AND TARNOFF

5. SIAD'S LETTER HAS JUST COME. IT IS AMBIGUOUS AND REFLECTS HIS SKEPTICISM. I REGRET THAT I DID NOT HAVE THE WIT TO TRY AND PIN HIM DOWN AS TO HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NON-LETHAL PACKAGE. I SUSPECT THAT HE WOULD HAVE BEEN VAGUE. ON RE-READING WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN ABOVE IT PORTRAYS SIAD AS MORE NEGATIVE AND DEMANDING, PARTICULARLY ABOUT THE TANKS AND AIRPLANES, THAN HE MAY BE. IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER HE ACTUALLY WANTS TANKS AND AIRPLANES, RATHER, HE TAKES THEIR UN-AVAILABILITY AS AN INDICATOR OF LIMITED COMMITMENT ON OUR PART. HE SAID "WE DO NOT NEED THEM TO USE THEM, BUT SO THAT THE PEOPLE CAN SEE THEM. US OFFICERS CAN COME TO TRAIN OUR PEOPLE AND TO CONVINCE THEM THAT WE SHOULD BE WITH THE UNITED (#) CHANCE AND ARE LOSING IT."

6. IN SUM THE OUTCOME OF OUR APPROACH TO SIAD REMAINS UNCLEAR. IT OBVIOUSLY BECAME EVIDENT TO HIM AS OUR DISCUSSIONS PROCEEDED THAT THE US WAS NOT PREPARED TO TAKE UP WHERE SOVIET LARGESSE HAD LEFT OFF. AS I HAVE REMARKED BEFORE, SIAD'S PRIMARY MOTIVATION IN CONSOLIDATING HIS POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US WAS THE SUPPLY OF ARMS ASSISTANCE. I DON'T THINK
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IT IS POSSIBLE TO SAY NOW WHETHER HE HAS REFUSED DEFINITELY TO UPGRADE HIS POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH US FOR THE MORE LIMITED MILITARY PACKAGE WE ARE CAPABLE TO OFFERING. PERHAPS THE INCREASED EMPHASIS WHICH HE PLACED ON DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TODAY REFLECTED A TREND IN HIS THINKING ABOUT THE FOCUS OF HIS FUTURE RELATIONSHIP WITH US. HE TALKED AT LENGTH (45 MINUTES) AND CONVINCINGLY ABOUT HIS ASPIRATIONS FOR HIS PEOPLE. ("BRINGING MY PEOPLE FROM NOMADIC LIFE TO THE MODERN DAY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR ME")

7. UPON MY RETURN TO WASHINGTON I WOULD LIKE TO EVALUATE FURTHER MY DISCUSSIONS HERE AND EXPLORE WHETHER WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DISCOVER SOME MID-COURSE TOWARDS SIAD THAT MIGHT BEGIN TO MEET BOTH OUR NEEDS AND HIS.

8. PLEASE NOTIFY ME IN NAIROBI OR KHARTOUM AS TO YOUR DECISION CONCERNING MY TRAVEL TO JIDDA. IN EVALUATING THIS QUESTION IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO CONSIDER HOW THE AMBIGUOUS SITUATION HERE WOULD AFFECT MY DISCUSSIONS AND WHETHER I SHOULD DISCUSS IN DETAIL MY CONVERSATION WITH SIAD. I AM RELUCTANT TO DO THIS WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY AND EVEN THEN, I AM NOT SURE WHETHER THIS IS ADVISABLE NOW.
LOUGHRAN

NOTE BY OC/T: (#) OMISSION. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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